

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 FBO-02 A-01 SS-15 SSO-00 /030 W

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O 092030Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4773

AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1578

DEPARTMENT FOR A/SY (DIKEOS, ST. MARS); A/SY/FO (VARROS);
A/SY/SAS (HARVEY); A/FBO (RALSTON) AND ARA/EX (ACKERMAN)

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, ABLD, ARA

SUBJECT: ATTEMPTED SABOTAGE, NEW CHANCERY SITE

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1564

1. ON MARCH 5, 1976 THE SECURITY OFFICE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM BROWN, INC., CONTRACT SECURITY COMPANY PROVIDING GUARD SERVICES TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, BUENOS AIRES. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KVATERNIK CO., SUBCONTRACTOR EMPLOYED AT NEW CHANCERY CONSTRUCTION SITE, INFORMED A BROWN SECURITY GUARD THAT IN THE PAST 7 WORKING DAYS, 2 ATTEMPTS HAD BEEN MADE TO CREATE AN EXPLOSION AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE BY TAMPERING WITH AN ACETYLENE WELDING UNIT. THE PARTICULAR EQUIPMENT USED EMPLOYS AN ACETYLENE GENERATOR. BOTH THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR AND OXYGEN TANK REVEALED THE RESULTS OF TAMPERING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORKDAY ON 2/28/76. THE SECOND INCIDENT, MARCH 4, 1976, WAS THE RESULT OF TAMPERING WITH THE OXYGEN SUPPLY WHICH WAS DISCOVERED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORKDAY MARCH 6. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF BROWN, INC. REVEALED THE FOLLOWING SLOGANS HAD BEEN WRITTEN ON THE WALLS OR EQUIPMENT CASES WITHIN THE NEW CHANCERY SITE: "KILL A YANKEE, AND YOU'LL BE A PATRIOT"; "THE PEOPLE PAY FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE YANKEE CAPITALISM". UNDERNEATH THE SLOGANS WAS WRITTEN THE NAME

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MONTONEROS UNDER WHICH WAS A RIFLE CROSSED WITH A LANCE

(THIS EMBLEM IS THE SYMBOL OF THE COMBATANT MONTONEROS).
THE TWO SLOGANS WERE NEW INSCRIPTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN PLACED
ON THE WALLS BETWEEN FEBRUARY 28 AND MARCH 8.

RSO COMMENT: SLOGANS OF BOTH THE ERP AND MONTONEROS AS
WELL AS COMMENTS RELATING TO LABOR PROBLEMS HAVE REPEATEDLY
BEEN FOUND INSCRIBED ON THE WALLS OF THE BUILDINGS OF THE
NEW CONSTRUCTION SITE. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM BROWN, INC.
WAS SUPPLIED TO THE SECURITY OFFICE AT APPROXIMATELY 2200
HOURS MARCH 5, SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR CONTACT WITH A REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE COMPANY EMPLOYING THE WELDING EQUIPMENT.

II. ON MARCH 6, MARIO ALBERTO MENDEZ, FEDERAL POLICE IDENTIFICATION
NUMBER 6.637.277, FOREMAN OF THE KVATERNIK COMPANY (PLUMBERS) WHO
DISCOVERED THE TAMPERING WITH THE ACETYLENE WELDING UNIT WAS NOT
AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW.

III. ON MARCH 6, A MEETING WAS HELD AT THE NEW CONSTRUCTION SITE
BETWEEN THE FBO PROJECT OFFICER, CONSEC SEABEES, EMBASSY SECURITY
OFFICERS, GSO AND REPRESENTATIVES OF BROWN, INC. THE GROUP
DISCUSSED THE POTENTIAL OF DAMAGE WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN CAUSED
BY AN EXPLOSION, RESULTING FROM TAMPERING WITH THE ACETYLENE UNIT.
IT WAS THE OPINION OF THE GROUP THAT THE TAMPERING WAS INTENTIONAL,
THAT IT COULD HAVE CAUSED A DAMAGING EXPLOSION, AND THAT THE
ELEMENTS OF SABOTAGE EXISTED. THE GROUP REVIEWED SECURITY MEASURES
AT THE SITE AND REACHED AGREEMENTS AS INDICATED:

A. A REVIEW OF THE ACCESS LOG REVEALED THAT 125 WORKERS WERE
PERFORMING DUTIES AT THE SITE EACH DAY. THE LOG ALSO INDICATED
THAT ALL OF THE WORKERS WERE NOT PRODUCING GOA IDENTIFICATION
CARDS IN ORDER TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE SITE. A NUMBER OF THE
WORKERS WERE USING DOCUMENTATION FROM SURROUNDING COUNTRIES.
THIS IS CONTRARY TO THE AGREED UPON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE
SECURITY OFFICE FOR ADMITTANCE TO THE SITE. APPROPRIATE SECURITY
CLEARANCES CANNOT BE RUN WITHOUT THE GOA FEDERAL POLICE
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER.

B. IT WAS AGREED BY THOSE PRESENT THAT A POLICE IDENTIFICATION
CARD WOULD BE REQUIRED OF ALL WORKERS WITHIN 10 DAYS.
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INDIVIDUALS REPORTING FOR WORK WITHOUT THIS CARD WILL NOT BE
PERMITTED ACCESS. (SECURITY OFFICE IS CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS
OF RUNNING POLICE CLEARANCES ON ALL WORKERS WHOSE IDENTITIES
ARE SUPPLIED BY THE CONTRACTORS.)

C. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE FBO PROJECT SUPERVISOR WOULD
CONTACT THE SUBCONTRACTOR EMPLOYING THE ACETYLENE WELDING
EQUIPMENT.

1. CONTRACTOR WOULD BE REQUESTED TO ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN AND USE BOTTLED ACETYLENE AND REMOVE THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR.

2. EQUIPMENT WOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE PRIMARY STRUCTURE AT THE CONCLUSION OF EACH WORKDAY.

3. EQUIPMENT WOULD BE INSPECTED DAILY OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING PRIOR TO BEING CARRIED INSIDE.

D. IT WAS AGREED THAT ALL VISITORS, REGARDLESS OF POSITION, WOULD BE ESCORTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE FBO PROJECT SUPERVISOR PRIOR TO BEING GRANTED ACCESS TO THE SITE. ONLY THOSE CLEARED BY THE FBO SUPERVISOR WILL BE PERMITTED FREE ACCESS TO THE SITE. ALL OTHERS WILL BE UNDER ESCORT.

IV. ON MARCH 8, MENDEZ (PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED) WAS INTERVIEWED BY BOTH RSOS. HE STATED IN SUBSTANCE THE FOLLOWING: THAT HIS COMPANY IS THE OWNER OF THE ACETYLENE UNIT WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF THE TAMPERING. THE WORKING HOURS FOR HIS PARTICULAR CREW ARE NORMALLY BETWEEN 0700 AND 1800 HOURS. THE PARTICULAR ACETYLENE UNIT WHICH IS IN USE EMPLOYS AN ACETYLENE GENERATOR. THIS GENERATOR IS CONSTRUCTED IN THREE SEPARATE COMPARTMENTS, I.E. CARBIDE, WATER, AND GAS RESERVOIR. THE ACETYLENE IS MANUFACTURED BY THE OPENING OF A "DRIP VALVE" CONNECTED TO THE WATER COMPARTMENT WHICH PERMITS WATER TO COMBINE WITH THE CARBIDE PRODUCING THE ACETYLENE GAS AS A RESULT OF THE MIXING. THE GAS IS INTERNALLY PIPED TO THE GAS RESERVOIR FROM WHICH IT CAN BE

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 FBO-02 A-01 SS-15 SSO-00 /030 W

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O 092030Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4774

AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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FED TO THE ACETYLENE TORCH. 11 POUNDS OF CARBIDE CONSTITUTES THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF CHEMICAL WHICH IS PLACED IN THE GENERATOR. SHOULD THE CHEMICAL REACTION BETWEEN THE WATER AND THE CARBIDE BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE WITHOUT INTERRUPTION FOR THE APPROXIMATE 20 HOURS, WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO EXHAUST THE CARBIDE, BETWEEN SEVEN AND EIGHT HUNDRED CUBIC FOOT OF ACETYLENE GAS WOULD BE PRODUCED. THE GAS RESERVOIR SECTION OF THE GENERATOR IS EQUIPPED WITH A PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE WHICH IS SET TO BLEED THE TANK WHEN THE PRESSURE OF THE GAS EXCEEDS 3.3 PSI. THE GENERATOR IS EQUIPPED WITH A GAUGE WHICH INDICATES INTERNAL TANK PRESSURE. THE SECOND ELEMENT OF THE ACETYLENE UNIT IS AN OXYGEN TANK WHICH, PRIOR TO DISCHARGE, HAS AN INITIAL 2,700 PSI. THIS TANK IS EQUIPPED WITH TWO GAUGES. ONE GAUGE IS A MASTER GAUGE WHICH FUNCTIONS WHEN THE MAIN TANK VALVE IS OPEN AND REFLECTS THE OXYGEN PRESSURE OF THE TANK ITSELF. AN OXYGEN SUPPLY VALVE IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE MAIN TANK SOURCE AND THE ACETYLENE TORCH. THIS VALVE IS EQUIPPED WITH A GAUGE WHICH DENOTES THE PRESSURE BEING SUPPLIED TO THE TORCH, NORMALLY 4 POUNDS FOR WELDING OPERATION. ON FEBRUARY 26, THE SOURCE CLOSED DOWN THE ACETYLENE SYSTEM, PLACING IT IN NON-OPERATING AND SAFE CONDITION AT THE TERMINATION OF THE WORKDAY. ON ARRIVAL AT WORK THE MORNING OF THE 27TH, HE COMMENCED ACTIVATING THE SYSTEM IN ORDER TO START WORK. HE OPENED THE WATER-DRIP VALVE OF THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR, STARTING THE COMBINING OF THE CARBIDE AND WATER, RESULTING IN THE PRODUCING OF THE ACETYLENE GAS. HE NOTICED THAT THE GAUGE ON THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR WAS REACTING IN A SECRET

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PECULIAR AND UNSTABLE FASHION. HE COMMENCED AN EXAMINATION OF THE GENERATOR. AS A RESULT OF THIS EFFORT, HE FOUND THE "STEM" HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE OF THE GAS RESERVOIR. HE IMMEDIATELY SHUT THE SYSTEM DOWN. THE VALVE STEM WAS FOUND ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE GENERATOR. SOURCE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE VALVE STEM, THE "VALVE BONNET" HAD TO BE UNSCREWED. THE CONDITION IN WHICH HE INITIALLY FOUND THE VALVE INDICATED THAT SUCH HAD OCCURRED, BUT THAT THE BONNET HAD BEEN REPLACED ON THE VALVE. WITH THE BONNET REPLACED A CASUAL OBSERVER COULD HAVE OVERLOOKED THE MISSING STEM. WITH THE STEM MISSING FROM THE VALVE, THE GENERATED GAS ESCAPED INTO THE SURROUNDING AREA.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMINATION OF THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR, SOURCE CONDUCTED AN EXAMINATION OF THE OXYGEN TANK. IT WAS FOUND THAT THE OXYGEN SUPPLY VALVE HAD BEEN OPENED TO ITS FULLEST. SHOULD THE MAIN TANK VALVE BE OPEN WITH THE SUPPLY VALVE IN

THE FULLY OPENED, CONDITION, THE TOTAL TANK PRESSURE WOULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED ON THE SUPPLY GAUGE AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE WELDING SYSTEM. THIS WOULD HAVE POSSIBLY CAUSED A RUPTURING OF THE OXYGEN LINE OR OTHER ELEMENTS, PERMITTING THE OXYGEN UNDER HIGH PRESSURE TO ESCAPE TO THE ADJACENT AREA.

IT WAS THE OPINION OF THE SOURCE THAT THE ESCAPING ACETYLENE (IF UNDETECTED) WOULD HAVE PRODUCED A HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED BY A CIGARETTE OR THE THROWING OF A LIGHT SWITCH. HE FURTHER OPINIONED THAT SHOULD THE OXYGEN ELEMENT HAVE RUPTURED AND THE OXYGEN HAD MIXED WITH THE ACETYLENE, THE BURNING RATE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE RAPID.

V. SOURCE ADVISED THAT ON MARCH 4, HE RENDERED HIS EQUIPMENT SAFE BEFORE DEPARTING THE JOB SITE. PRIOR TO COMMENCING WORK ON MARCH 5, HE EXAMINED THE EQUIPMENT. THE ACETYLENE GENERATOR REVEALED NO TAMPERING. HOWEVER, UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL(S) HAD PLACED GREASE ON ALL OF THE CONNECTIONS OF THE OXYGEN SUPPLY SYSTEM. SOURCE STATED THAT SHOULD THE MAIN OXYGEN SUPPLY VALVE HAVE BEEN OPENED, AN IMMEDIATE EXPLOSION WOULD HAVE OCCURRED. SOURCE REVEALED THAT SUBSEQUENT TO FINDING
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THE SECOND SABOTAGE ATTEMPT, HE CONTACTED THE BROWN SECURITY GUARD ON THE SITE (WHO RELAYED THE INFORMATION TO HIS SUPERVISOR WHO IN TURN INFORMED THE SECURITY OFFICER).

VI. ON MARCH 8, RSOS EXAMINED TIME CARDS OF EMPLOYEES WORKING AT THE SITE IN AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE WHICH PERSONNEL DEPARTED THE SITE OF MARCH 4 AFTER THE SOURCE. THIS EFFORT PRODUCED NEGATIVE RESULTS SINCE ALL CONTRACTORS DO NOT REQUIRE THAT THEIR EMPLOYEES USE TIME CARDS. BROWN SECURITY GUARDS AND CONSEC SEABEES WERE INTERVIEWED IN AN ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE ANY KNOWLEDGE THEY COULD HAVE CONCERNING PERSONNEL WHO COULD HAVE DEPARTED THE SITE AFTER THE SOURCE. SEABEES STATED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO RECALL INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN ON THE SITE, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW THEIR NAMES. SEABEES ADVISED THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THESE INDIVIDUALS BY LOOKING AT THE WORK BADGE NUMBER AND COMPARING IT WITH THE DOCUMENTS LEFT AT THE GUARD HOUSE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NAMES.

VII. THE BROWN SECURITY GUARD POST AT THE CHANCERY SITE WAS INSTRUCTED TO IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE RECORDING ENTRANCE AND EXIT TIMES OF ALL WORKERS. AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO DETERMINE OTHER WORKERS ON SITE WHO HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF ACETYLENE WELDING. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE INDIVIDUAL(S)

WHO PERFORMED THE ACTS OF SABOTAGE HAS SUCH A KNOWLEDGE.
THE WELDING UNIT WHICH WAS THE SUBJECT OF TAMPERING IS THE
ONLY SUCH UNIT PRESENTLY ON THE SITE. SUBSEQUENT REPORTS
WILL FOLLOW.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 09 MAR 1976
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition History: n/a
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